

## 9. Cultural Resources

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### Setting

This section is based on the "Overview Record Search for Cultural Resources" conducted by the North Central Information Center prepared for the County's Auburn/Bowman Community Plan update as well as background information in the proposed Historic Element and the City of Auburn Supplemental Historic Sites Survey (HBA 1990).

**Prehistory.** During the prehistoric era, the Auburn region was home to the Nisenan or Southern Maidu Native Americans. The Native Americans which inhabited the area are classified as Hill Nisenan, although commonly referred to as "Maidu." The Hill Nisenan differed from the Valley Nisenan, who inhabited the Sacramento Valley, in a number of ways including dialect, environment, and lifestyles. The Hill Nisenan are thought to have inhabited the region for some 2000 years prior to the arrival of the Euro-American.

The Auburn region provided a relative abundance and diversity of resources which supported numerous known villages in the area. However, the discovery of gold in the area during the middle of the 19th century resulted in an enormous influx of Euro-Americans and the subsequent near extinction of the Hill Nisenan population, culture, and language.

**History.** The first Euro-Americans in the area were believed to be fur traders and hunters who came down the American River and began working in the area in 1825, long before the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848. In 1846 Claude Chana, a French prospector, arrived in the area via Donner Pass, preceding the Donner Party by a few weeks. He brought with him the seeds of fruits and nuts which he planted in nearby Bear Valley. On May 16, 1848, Chana discovered gold in Auburn Ravine in the vicinity of Auburn's "Old Town". The mining camp was initially called by several names — North Fork Dry Diggins, Rich Ravine, Wood's Dry Diggins — but by November of 1849 it became known as Auburn (Auburn Main Street Architectural Design Guidelines (AMSADG), 1989). In the summer of 1849 prospectors pitched tents and began prospecting for gold. Cabins were eventually constructed and when pack animals and wagons subsequently came, they sought the most convenient passageways and thus marked the streets of the future town of Auburn. The City is still marked by this meandering layout of roads. Due to its central location and accessibility, Auburn became a trading post and wintering location.

Within the proposed Sphere of Influence important in early mining were Auburn Ravine, Baltimore Hill and Ravine, Duncan Hill and Ravine, North Ravine, and Tamaroo Bar. The peak of gold production is estimated to have occurred in 1851 to 1852. By that time the age of the independent prospector and miner was ending, principally because the easy places to extract gold had been worked. In order to continue to mine gold, large-scale operations were needed and mining

advanced to hydraulic methods. During that time, huge flumes and ditches to transport water to mining claims were constructed. Many of the large canals throughout the area, including Shirland, Boardman, Lone Star, Combie-Ophir, Gold Hill, Wise, Upper Boardman, Dudley, Ophir, Fiddler Green, and North, are thought to have been constructed for mining purposes.

In addition to Auburn, the Bowman town site is within the proposed Sphere of Influence. Bowman was home to a store, post office, and high ridge berry farms and was famed for its production of raspberries and strawberries which were sold to fruit houses in Penryn and Newcastle. At one time grading was completed for a street car line which was never constructed.

Although gold led to the beginning of Auburn, a secondary economy soon evolved around banking, lodging, and provisions as other areas of the Mother Lode opened up to gold mining. This resulted in the development of a variety of building types to house each of these activities. Old Town's population also began to change, reflecting Auburn's developing economy, from predominantly miners to a population that included lawyers, bankers, and shopkeepers.

Incorporation of Auburn as a city occurred in 1860; then it disincorporated in 1868 and reincorporated in 1888. In 1865, the transcontinental railroad from Sacramento arrived in Auburn with a profound effect. The railroad chose to bypass Old Town, establishing tracks and a station to the east, closer to what was to become the Downtown area of Auburn. With the development of Downtown, two historic areas evolved in Auburn, each with its own distinct character reflecting the time, people, and events that influenced development of the area.

It was the arrival of the railroad to the area, coupled with the decline of the gold rush, which allowed two other industries, agriculture and to a lesser extent, timber, to flourish in the area which bolstered the central function of the City of Auburn. Although agricultural pursuits began in about 1845 in western Placer County, it wasn't until after the gold rush that agriculture became the economic mainstay of the area. With its favorable climate and fertile soil, the area became a mecca for the fruit industry. While farms in other areas of the arid west were faced with dry-farming, or farming with crude irrigation systems, the Auburn and Bowman areas utilized the canal systems built for mining operations. Extensive fruit ranches were established especially in the Bowman, Dry Creek, and North Auburn areas. By 1890 and the advent of the refrigerator car, western Placer County fruit was known nationally and by 1920 western Placer County was the largest fruit producing region of the state. Few of the fruit ranches had their own packing houses. Instead, fruit was transported to the large packing houses in Auburn, Colfax, Loomis, Penryn, and Newcastle.

Two events marked the downfall of the fruit industry of the region. The first decline occurred around the end of the 1920's and extended through the depression years. It was the result of the infestation of the fruit trees with pear blight disease coupled with the bad economic times of the depression. Many orchard owners borrowed money to keep orchards operational, but as economic times became tougher they couldn't repay debts and lost their orchards. The fruit industry never fully recovered from the depression, although it did see a short resurrection during WWII when the demand for produce wasn't being met by the supply. After WWII the fruit

industry continued to decline due to the shortage of labor, fruit oversupply, the greater economic feasibility of valley orchards, the loss of top soil due to extensive plowing, and most significantly—because the orchard land had become valuable for other purposes.

From the beginning of the decline of the fruit industry, fruit orchards were not replaced. Typically they were cleared and converted to dairy farms and cattle ranches. By the 1960's almost all of the fruit orchards, dairy farms, and cattle ranches had ceased to exist. Today, only a few remnants of the area's agricultural heyday exist. These include the remaining olive trees in the vicinity of Aeolia Heights, the orchards along I-80 in the Bowman area, and the working ranches along Mt. Vernon Road. It is also possible to see small portions of abandoned orchards elsewhere throughout the Plan area. However, most of the large land holdings have been subdivided to provide ranchettes for families seeking a rural lifestyle.

Many ethnic groups played a role in the history of the area. For example, the Chinese originally came to the area during the late 1840's during the gold rush. Being limited to only the mining claims which all others had abandoned, the Chinese worked diligently with simple tools to extract the remaining gold. A Chinatown emerged in Auburn at Sacramento Street and Brewery Lane, remnants of which are still visible (i.e., Shanghai) (the Tsuda Market, of course, was founded by a Japanese family). During the 1860's, many Chinese found work with the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Upon the completion of the railroad, the Chinese laborers returned to the area to work in the hydraulic mines, at digging ditches, canal construction, or at agricultural pursuits. Very few of the Chinese remain in the area today, most probably because of the ill-treatment they received. One remaining artifact of Chinese history within the area is the Chinese Cemetery located on Highway 49. The cemetery was necessary since Chinese were not permitted to be buried in the City cemetery.

**Previous Surveys in the Plan area.** As of August 3, 1990, there had been a total of 93 cultural resources recorded as archaeological sites or isolated features within the Auburn/Bowman Community Plan area (which includes the proposed Sphere of Influence) and the City of Auburn. Thirty-six of these sites and five isolated artifacts/features had been reviewed by the State and/or North Central Information Center. The remaining 52 sites had not been formally reviewed and processed. The sites which had been reviewed included 11 prehistoric village sites, several with associated bedrock mortars (grinding rocks), rock shelters (small shallow caves) or aboriginal house pit features. There were at least 11 sites recorded which are primarily bedrock mortar features, some of which have scattered stone artifacts in association. One occurs with a scatter of early historic artifact debris. There were also a couple of lithic scatters (stone tool and manufacturing debris) which are not associated with bedrock mortars or village remains. Relative to historic resources, four mining sites had been recorded as well as three other locations of old foundations, rock walls, etc. This range of sites is very typical of the foothill region which was one of the most densely populated areas both during prehistoric and early historic times.

In addition to the historic sites which have been recorded by archaeologists, there are also many features which have been recognized as State Landmarks, National

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In addition to the historic sites which have been recorded by archaeologists, there are also many features which have been recognized as State Landmarks, National Register properties or other points of special interest. These include the old portion of the City of Auburn, the route of the Pioneer Trail, the route of the First Transcontinental Road (also known as the Central Pacific) which is now known as a Southern Pacific line, and the Wise Powerhouse. In addition to these referenced locations there are numerous features shown on the USGS maps with potential historic significance. These include the Auburn Rancheria, the sites of the Columbia School, Bowman and Millertown, as well as various old railroad grades and canals. Numerous buildings have been inventoried as historic structures in the City of Auburn including the Auburn Iron Works and the Irene Burns Home which are State Points of Historical Interest. The Auburn area historic inventory is available through the Placer County Department of Museums. Two historic resource inventories have been conducted in the City in 1986 and 1990 which together locate all of the structures in the older sections of the City. The two surveys indicate that there are potentially about 400 historically significant properties within the city limits.

A recently completed inventory of the historic and architecturally significant sites in the unincorporated regions of the Auburn/Bowman Community Plan area, (much of which is within the proposed Sphere of Influence) conducted by the Placer County Cultural Resources Inventory Task Force, has recorded close to 100 additional sites.

**Area Sensitivity.** Based upon archaeological reports and historic references, the local topography, numerous drainages and a wide variety of natural resources, as well as what is known from the ethnographic literature, the Auburn region is generally of very high sensitivity for both historic and prehistoric resources. The results of the survey work support this assessment; virtually every survey report discusses one or more finds.

There are variations in the sensitivity level throughout the Plan area. Zones near water sources such as creeks, rivers and springs were generally preferred living areas and much of the early mining was concentrated near the creeks and ravines. Many of the currently known sites, however, have been recorded in the gently rolling hills between the drainages. As a result, the areas adjacent to drainages and immediately around known historic features are classified as of high sensitivity. Most of the remaining lands would be considered in the moderate to high range. The steepest slopes in the American River canyon are rated as least sensitive.

**Impact  
Evaluation  
Criteria**

**Current Preservation Efforts.** Preservation efforts in Auburn have led to the development of two historic districts. The Old Town Historic District includes buildings constructed between 1850 and 1900. The Downtown Historic District includes buildings constructed between 1900 and 1940 with many 1920s era structures dominating the area. Design review is required in these two districts. However, the district regulations do not apply to residential structures and application of the guidelines are subject to approval or denial by the Old Town Historic Design Review Committee and the Planning Commission.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Appendix K, characterizes significant impacts as those causing damage to an "important archaeologic resource", which is defined as something which:

- A. Is associated with an event or person of:
  - 1. Recognized significance in California or American history, or
  - 2. Recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- B. Can provide information which is both of demonstrable public interest and useful in addressing scientifically consequential and reasonable historical [sic] or archaeological research questions;
- C. Has a special or particular quality such as oldest, best example, largest, or last surviving example of its kind;
- D. Is at least 100 years old and possesses substantial stratigraphic integrity; or
- E. Involves important research questions that historical research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.

A similar and related set of criteria is that which is used to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (36 Code of Federal Regulations 800). These legal and professional guidelines, grounded in Federal law, are summarized below.

The quality of significance in American history, Architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of State and local importance that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and:

- 1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- 2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- 3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that possess high artistic values, or that

represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

4. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Since the project in this case is the adoption of a General Plan land use maps and policies and implementing zoning, the ability of the Plan to avoid impacts to the resources described above needs to be evaluated. The following questions need to be asked:

1. Are intense land use designations which will result in most of a site being disturbed proposed in areas of high or moderate cultural resource sensitivity or where specific sites have been identified? If so, significant unmitigatable impacts could result.
2. Will policies ensure that undiscovered sites will be identified as buildout occurs? If not, significant, unmitigatable impacts could result.

## **Impacts**

1. **Impacts to historic and prehistoric resources.**

**Existing City Limits** ~ The Plan includes goals, policies, and implementation programs which call for protection of cultural resources and emphasizes protection of the historic commercial and residential core of the City.

In particular, a new historic area is recommended in the Plan between I-80 and the railroad tracks (Area III on Figure 9-1). Development Guidelines are proposed for each of the four historic areas delineated in the Plan (see Table 9-1), however, whether or not these guidelines will be used as part of a mandatory review procedure within Areas III and IV and of residences within Areas I and II is not clear. As a result, there is still some potential for loss of historic character of structures in these areas. Other areas of concern within existing City limits are listed on Table 9-1 but include ravines on still undeveloped land, remnants of canals and ditches and non-structural features such as fences, signs, etc. In addition, the General Plan does not discuss preservation of prehistoric resources. The Mitigation Measures section recommends tightening of related policy and implementation wording in the Historic Element.

**Table 9-1  
AUBURN GENERAL PLAN HISTORIC ELEMENT  
DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

Regulation/Standard	Area I Old Town	Area II Downtown	Area III Residential	Area IV Forest- hill/ Azolla
<b>1. Existing Historic Buildings</b>				
1.1 Requires public hearing for demolition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.2 Remodel				
Authentic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary	No	No	No	No
<b>2. Existing Non-Historic Buildings</b>				
2.1 May Remain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.2 Demolition Permitted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.3 Remodel				
Authentic	No	No	No	No
Compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>3. Construction of New Buildings</b>				
Authentic	No	No	No	No
Compatible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contemporary	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>4. Accessory Buildings</b>				
Authentic	No	No	No	No
Compatible	Yes	Yes	No	No
Contemporary	No	No	Yes	Yes
SOURCE: Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc.				

SOURCE: Auburn General Plan, Table XI-2, September 1992. p. XI-13.

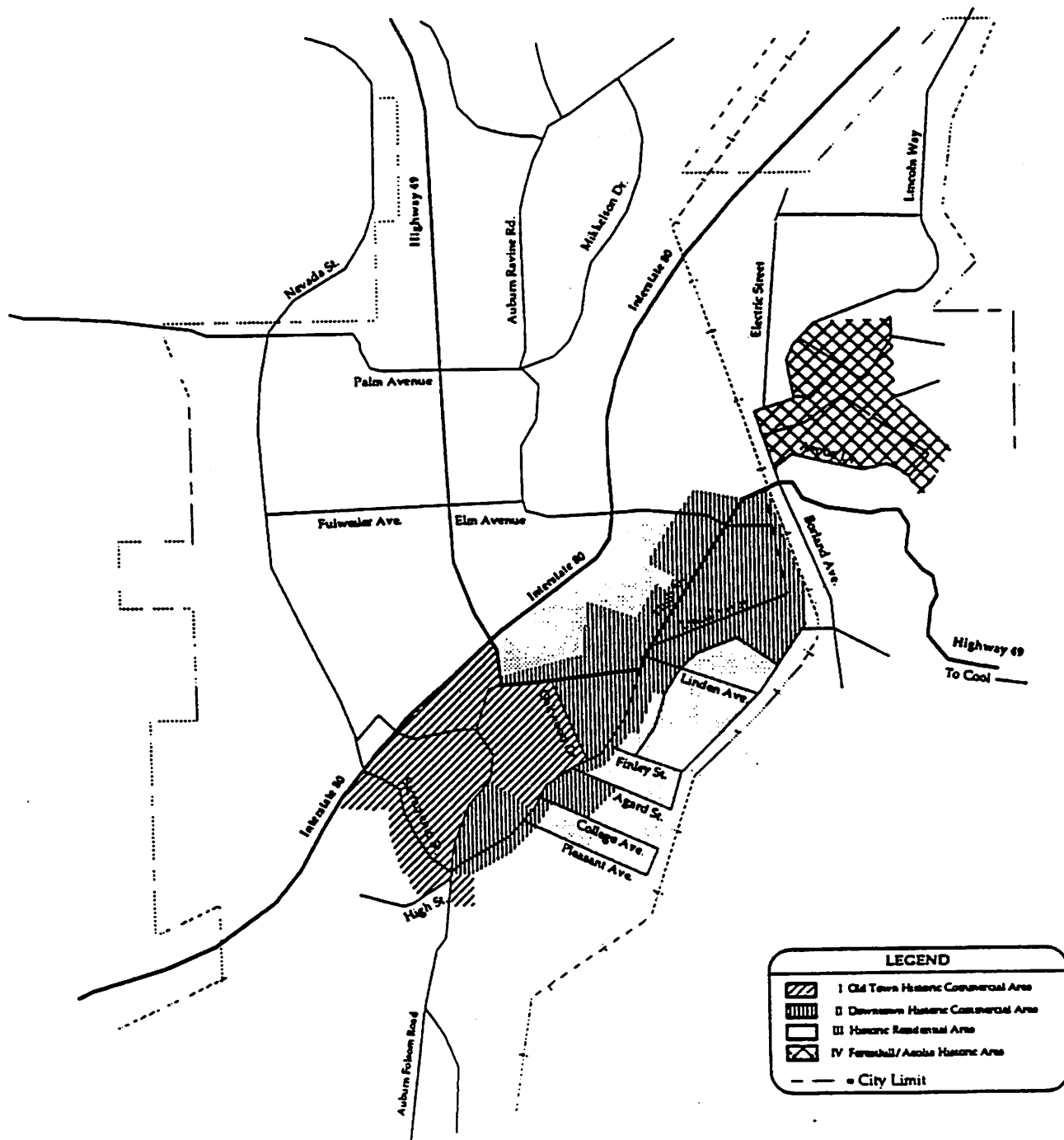
**Sphere of Influence** ~ Also of concern are specific sites and areas within the existing and proposed Sphere of Influence which have been identified in the various surveys discussed in the Setting section. These areas do not have the same level of protection applied to them in the Plan. Protection of prehistoric resources is not called for in the Plan. As described in the Setting section, much of the area is of moderate-high cultural resource sensitivity. The City generally requires development setbacks from streams; however, this policy is not formalized in the Plan text. In addition, numerous areas of moderate to high sensitivity are designated for fairly urban densities. Commercial and industrial land use designations as well as residential parcel sizes under two acres in size (with no clustering requirements) are expected to result in enough site disturbance that loss of any cultural resources present is probable.

Areas of particular concern at this time are shown on Table 9-2.

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**FIGURE 9-1**  
**CITY OF AUBURN GENERAL PLAN HISTORIC AREAS**



No Scale



July 1992

**CITY OF AUBURN GENERAL PLAN**  
**HISTORIC AREAS**

Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Inc.

**FIGURE 1**

Page XI-5

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**Table 9-2**  
**AUBURN GENERAL PLAN CULTURAL AREAS OF CONCERN**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Proposed Land Use Designation</b>
<b>Existing City Limits</b>	
Pioneer Trail Alignment	Varies
First Continental Railroad Alignment	Varies, most OS but some in urban uses
Canals and ditches	Varies
Ravines (small ravines as well as major ravines such as Baltimore & Auburn)	Varies
Various sites within City Core identified in the two City inventories.	Varies, but protected by specific policies in Plan
Non-structural and other Historic Features, etc stone walls, signs, flumes, fences orchard remnants, visible foundations and mining/agricultural operation remains. Outbuildings and barns.	Land use designations vary as these features are scattered throughout the Plan area.
<b>Existing Sphere of Influence</b>	
Pioneer Trail Alignment	Varies
First Continental Railroad Alignment	Varies, most OS but some in urban uses
Auburn Rancheria	ULDR (4 ac/du)
Canals and Ditches	Varies
Ravines	Varies
Specific Sites:	
6. Cal-Ida Lumber Co.	MU
16. Southern Pacific Underpass	OS/MDR
20. Mt Vernon Grange Hall	Comm
34. Gasoline Alley	Comm
35. Edgewood Grocery Store	Comm
46. Mark Beecher Home	MDR
47. Bettireunds Home	ULDR
49. Oak Ridge Farm	Com
50. Ray Weller Home	ULDR
51. Fellencer Farm	MDR
52. Lester Millam House	MDR
62. Goldsberry Ranch, 3605 Grass Valley Hwy/ Rock Creek School Site	Comm
67. Bissett Ranch	Comm
Non-Structural and Other Historic Features: stone walls, signs, flumes, fences orchard remnants, visible foundations and mining/agricultural operation remains. Outbuildings and barns.	Land use designations varies as these features are scattered throughout the Plan area.
<b>Areas Proposed for Addition to Sphere</b>	
Pioneer Trail Alignment	Varies
First Continental Railroad Alignment	Varies, most OS but some in urban uses
Bowman Townsite	Varies
Canals and Ditches	Varies
Ravines	Varies

Continued...

**Table 9-2 (cont.)  
AUBURN GENERAL PLAN CULTURAL AREAS OF CONCERN**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Proposed Land Use Designation</b>
<b>Areas Proposed for Addition to Sphere (cont.)</b>	
<b>Non-Structural and Other Historic Features:</b> stone walls, signs, flumes, fences orchard remnants, visible foundations and mining/agricultural operation re- mains. Outbuildings and barns.	Land use designations varies as these features area are scattered through- out the Plan area
<b>Specific Sites:</b> 1. WPA Bridge, Hanes Rd over PGE Cnl 4. WPA Bridge, Haines Rd over Dry Cr 5. WPA Bridge, Dry Creek Rd west of Valley Quail Ln 7. Glenoaks Auto Court 8. Armbuster Home 15. Southern Pacific Culvert/Rock wall 22. Bowman Store Site 23. Bowman Auto Court 25. Ackerman School 48. Channel Hill Grocery 69. Halbom Ranch 71. PG&E Bridge over Wise Canal	RR OS  OS MDR MH Comm ULDR Comm MDR-MTT Comm MDR Ind RR-OS

**Note:** Numbers refer to a confidential map located in Placer County Planning Dept. files; sites within Open Space are not included in this list except circulation facilities (bridges) which could face reconstruction regardless of land use designation.

Though the Plan includes goals, policies generally intended to protect such resources, protection of these areas and specific sites does not seem possible without redesignation in some cases or inclusion of specific wording calling for preservation of these features. In particular, the policies do not include a reference to prehistoric resources.

**Table 9-3  
AUBURN GENERAL PLAN  
RELEVANT HISTORIC ELEMENT POLICIES/IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

**Goal:** Preserve all historical sites and enhance the character of the historic districts.

**Policies**

- 1.1 Implement the Historic Development Guidelines listed in the Historic Element
- 1.2 Preserve existing Indian and Chinese cemeteries and other historic sites.

**Implementation**

- A. The City shall prepare and adopt Historic District designation for the Old Town, Downtown, Historic Residential (1850-1940), and the Foresthill/Aeolia Avenue areas.
- B. The City shall implement the Historic District Development Guidelines and the Auburn Main Street Architectural Design Guidelines.
- C. The City shall inventory historic city sites and prepare an historic site ordinance.

**Conclusion:**

Based upon the evaluation criteria and analysis above, impacts are expected to be significant and unmitigable; this is largely due to potential development within the Sphere of Influence since City programs with slight revision are expected to mitigate impacts within City limits.

*The following discussion from Final-56 resulted from changes made by the Planning Commission to the draft Plan:*

*Only three land use designation changes were located on or in the vicinity of identified cultural resources. One change did not alter the level of impact expected (MU to Commercial at the Bohemia site). The other two changes were mitigating in nature by incorporation of a CD/OSP Overlay which is expected to allow flexibility to design around cultural resources.*

Ref:  
Final  
EIR  
p.56

**Mitigation  
Measures**

- 1. Historic and Prehistoric sites.
  - 1a. Implementation Measure B should be revised to require adoption of an ordinance requiring review of development in Areas I, II, III, and IV per the Development Guidelines. The text on Plan page XI-7 should be revised accordingly.
  - 1b. Addition of more specific implementation program. The following program elements would address the concerns noted in the Impact section for areas and issues not covered by the Development Guidelines.
    - Require record search as part of all grading permits, building permits and land use applications requiring environmental review and require appropriate treatment per resulting recommendations. (This will address historic and prehistoric concerns.)

Ref: Final  
EIR, p.88

- Require demolition permit and historical analysis by an accredited historian of all structures (including outbuildings) over 30 years in age.
- Develop demolition ordinance prohibiting demolition of structures over 30 years in age if they contribute to the historic fabric of the community. (Individual historic significance is of concern as well as the overall historic backdrop of the community.)
- Redesignate the following areas:
  1. Pioneer Trail alignment to Open Space ~~where it occurs on undeveloped private land~~
  2. ~~Key landmarks along~~ Full-length of First Continental Railroad alignment to Open Space
  3. Historic canals & ditches rights-of-way to Open Space
- Work with PCWA on retaining historic canals and ditches which is counter to the agency's piping policy.
- Call for specific site protection in Plan text. The Plan text should be revised to call for the protection and retention within future development of the following sites. (These sites are located within land use designations which are generally appropriate to provide for retention or adaptive reuse.) These sites should also be called out on the Land Use Map where possible. This list should be added to as new inventories are conducted.

**Table 9-4**  
**SITES TO BE SPECIFICALLY PROTECTED AND**  
**INCLUDED WITHIN FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**Existing City Limits**

**Non-Structural & Other Historic Features such as:**

stone walls, signs, flumes, fences, orchard remnants, mining/ agricultural remains, outbuildings/barns when possible.

**Historic Structures which:**

may be outside the designated Historic Areas (I-IV).

**Existing Sphere of Influence**

**Auburn Rancheria**

**Specific Sites:**

6. Cal-Ida Lumber Co.
16. Southern Pacific Underpass at Luther/Hwy 49
20. Mt Vernon Grange Hall
34. Gasoline Alley
35. Edgewood Grocery Store
46. Mark Beecher Home
47. Bettireunds Home
49. Oak Ridge Farm
50. Ray Weller Home
51. Fellencer Farm
52. Lester Millam House
62. Goldsberry Ranch, 3605 Grass Valley Hwy/  
Rock Creek School Site
67. Bissett Ranch

Historic Structures which:  
may be outside the designated Historic Areas (I-IV).

**Proposed Sphere of Influence Additions**

Non-Structural & Other Historic Features such as:  
stone walls, signs, flumes, fences, orchard remnants, mining/ agri-  
cultural remains, outbuildings/barns when possible.

**Specific Sites:**

1. WPA Bridge
4. Wpa Bridge
5. WPA Bridge
7. Glenoaks Auto Court
8. Armbuster Home
15. Southern Pacific Culvert/Rock wall
22. Bowman Store Site
23. Bowman Auto Court
25. Ackerman School
48. Channel Hill Grocery
69. Halborn Ranch
71. PG&E Bridge over Wise Canal

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Note: Sites within the Sphere of Influence can be located on the Confidential Cultural Resources Inventory in the Placer County Planning Dept.

- f. Add stream setback policy. See Biotic Resources section for detailed wording.
- g. Revise land use designations as new information becomes available.
- h. Request that the cultural resources inventory underway by the Department of Museums include non-structural historic features as well as outbuildings and orchards/vegetation groupings which contribute to the historic fabric of the area.

**Effectiveness of Measure:** These measures will serve to mitigate impacts to the maximum extent possible. However, the following sites are not expected to be assured complete protection: #62 Rock Creek School site remains; the various features in the Bowman Commercial area; in addition, until the non-structural/historic vegetation/outbuilding inventory is conducted, impacts to these features can be expected.

Finally, it is still expected that individual projects will result in individually minor yet cumulatively significant loss of cultural resources which cannot be avoided in the development an area with such widely scattered cultural resource remains. As a result, impacts are still considered potentially significant and unmitigatable both from the Plan alone and combined with County development outside the Plan area.

**Implementation:** Text addition to final Plan.

**Mitigation Monitoring:** Individual project review and yearly Plan progress report

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